

30 MAY - 2 JUNE 2019



ENGLISH
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

ELGAR FESTIVAL

KENNETH WOODS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
JULIAN LLOYD WEBBER PATRON

CONCERTS,
EVENTS, EXHIBITS
AND ACTIVITIES
FOR ELGAR FANS
OF ALL AGES

*Elgar for
Everyone*

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME



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BOX OFFICE: www.elgarfestival.org / Worcester Live 01905 611427 / on the door where available

WELCOME



Welcome to the 2019 Elgar Festival. This has been a year of remarkable growth and rapid change for the festival, and I'm incredibly grateful to our committee members, trustees, partners and supporters.

Together, we've managed to more than double the scope of the festival, and hugely increase our level of community engagement, work with young people and outreach, in addition to producing world-class concerts worthy of our namesake. I would particularly like to thank Anne Renshaw, my most dedicated and industrious colleague for her tireless efforts. We say goodbye this year to our founding Chairman, Alany Feeney, who played a vitally important early roll in bringing together the network of artistic and community partners which has already made the festival so successful. And I'm also very excited to welcome our new Chairman, Adrian Gregson. He has been an advocate of the arts, history and cultural identity of our city, as well as being a champion for Sir Edward Elgar's legacy; most notably for campaigning to keep the Elgar archives in Worcestershire where we all feel they belong.

This year, we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Elgar's Cello Concerto, one of the most private and personal pieces of music I know which has found a place in the hearts of millions. Although Elgar's name will forever be associated with a certain kind of Romantic grandeur, he was first and foremost a poet of the soul. It is that aspect of his complex personality we celebrate this year.

Kenneth Woods
Artistic Director



Welcome to this year's Elgar Festival in Worcester for a programme which we hope has something in it for everyone. Our aim at the Elgar Festival is to make Elgar and his music more accessible, more available and more relevant to audiences of every age and background. So this year we have expanded the event to four days and lined up a range of activities and concerts to deliver just that - Elgar for Everyone!

The Festival, launched last year by our outgoing Chair Alan Feeney, is a great innovation for Worcester. It celebrates the city's most famous son in a way that is open and friendly, welcoming visitors and letting local people celebrate the things that are great about Worcester.

We are privileged to have such talented musicians and performers committed to this long weekend, including so many young people. It is a mark of the importance of Elgar to Worcester, and of the growing reputation of what is still a young music festival.

The Gala Concert on Saturday night in the Cathedral is rich in quality of music and performers, and we are indebted to Kenneth Woods, the Festival's Artistic Director, for delivering this event.

Finally, as incoming Chairman of the Festival I would like to thank my predecessor, Alan Feeney who built on the ideas and suggestions that had been around for some time, to actually make it happen.

Dr Adrian Gregson
Chairman

THURSDAY 30 MAY - SATURDAY 1 JUNE

FREE

10.00AM TO 4.00PM

The Guildhall, High Street, Worcester WR1 2EY

THE ANNUAL ELGAR FESTIVAL EXHIBITION



12th September 1905. Elgar leaving the Guildhall, accompanied by the mayor Alderman Hubert Leicester, after having received the Honorary Freedom of the City of Worcester.

In September 1905, Edward Elgar was awarded the Freedom of the City of Worcester. The official documents of the time recorded that the award *“be conferred upon Sir Edward William Elgar, Mus. Doc., LL.D., in recognition of the eminent position which he, a Citizen of the Faithful City, has attained in the Musical World”*.

The ceremony took place in Worcester’s historic and beautiful Guildhall, so it is perhaps appropriate that The Guildhall should be the venue for the Annual Elgar Festival Exhibition, as The City of Worcester celebrates the life of its most famous son.

Edward Elgar was the first British composer for 200 years to achieve true international greatness. He dined with royalty and his music is played all over the world. But his career had a slow start and the first half of his life was spent as a local musician in and around Worcester, picking up performing fees and teaching jobs wherever he could. This exhibition includes original manuscripts, letters, photographs, personal possessions and memorabilia, and through them you can follow the story of how Worcester’s “Ted” Elgar became Sir Edward Elgar, First Baronet of Broadheath.

The exhibition is open from Thursday to Saturday, and entry is free.

This international collection of manuscripts and artefacts is generously presented and sponsored by Arthur Reynolds.



THURSDAY 30 MAY - SUNDAY 2 JUNE

FREE

DROP IN ANY TIME

Henry Sandon Hall, Worcester WR1 2NX

THE NATIONAL TRUST PRESENTS: AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE WITH ELGAR: PLAY ELGAR'S PIANO



In 1931 an aging Elgar had a gift for his valet's young daughter, Betty Theresa. He took a small upright piano down from storage in his attic at Marl Bank, his Worcester home, and gave it to the delighted young girl. Betty Theresa cherished the gift all of her life and when she passed away, left it to the care of a neighbour.

In January 2018 the neighbour generously donated the piano to the care of the National Trust at The Firs, Elgar's Birthplace. Since then it has been restored and re-tuned to bring it to a playable standard. The National Trust has designed an immersive exhibit surrounding the piano and offers you the opportunity to play one of Elgar's own instruments at Worcester's Henry Sandon Hall.

The piano will be on display in the foyer area between the hours of 9:00AM and 5:00PM each day of the festival and knowledgeable guides will be on hand to bring its story to life.

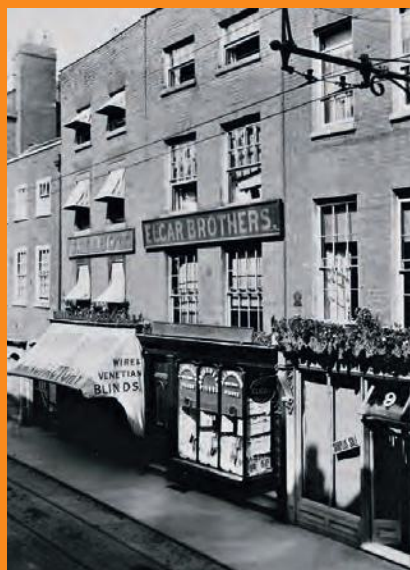
Generously supported by Arthur Reynolds, the National Trust and by public donations

ROYAL
PORCELAIN
WORKS

ELGAR FESTIVAL AT THE HIVE



The Hive is an award-winning building on the northern edge of medieval Worcester only 15 minutes' walk from the Cathedral with wonderful views across the Severn to the Malvern Hills. The Hive has outstanding Green credentials and was born of an innovative partnership between the University of Worcester and Worcestershire County Council. It brings together the University and public library and Worcestershire's Archive and Archaeology Service www.explorethepast.co.uk



It also houses one of the country's largest children's libraries, council customer care centre, a business centre, meeting rooms, study areas, studio theatre and a café. It is open from 8.30am to 10pm every day of the week.

Between the 30th May and the 2nd June on Level 2 of The Hive we will be displaying a small range of documents and images relating to the Elgar family in Worcester as well as a number of Three Choirs Festival programmes featuring Elgar as a composer and also as performer and conductor.

To introduce and inspire people of all ages to engage in music there will be a classical music display in the Atrium and we will be offering **music themed story-telling sessions for children** on **Saturday and Sunday** at **11am** and **14:45**.

There is no charge to visit the Hive so why not spend an hour looking at the display on Level 2 and then, with a coffee and cake from the café, move to Level 3 and take in a panorama of the landscape that inspired Elgar.

The **Hive**

EXPLORE THE ELGAR ROUTE

On the first day of the Elgar Festival, the Elgar Route will be relaunched with new signage in place to direct visitors along the inspirational leisure route. The Elgar Route allows visitors to tour the glorious countryside and the magnificent landscape which inspired Elgar to write his iconic music.

The Elgar Route will be launched working in partnership with the Malvern car manufacturer Morgan Motor Cars and the Morgan Sports Car Club. Keep your eyes out for the Morgan rally touring the Elgar Route from Great Malvern to Worcester and onto The Firs: Elgar's Birthplace in Lower Broadheath.



To find out more about the Elgar Route, please visit www.VisitTheMalverns.org/ElgarRoute or call Malvern TIC on 01684 892289.

The
Elgar
Route



REMEMBER ME?

I'm Eddie! I was on display in Worcester last summer as part of the wonderful Worcester Stands Tall initiative.

I'm only here for a short while to help promote the Festival before I return to my forever home where I live very comfortably with my generous new owners. The auction of the herd last year helped to raise over £400,000 to support a major extension at St. Richard's Hospice.

Come and find me at the Elgar Festival in the High Street outside the Guildhall – I'm a bit of an Enigma! Take a selfie, and enjoy the Festival!

THURSDAY 30 MAY

FREE

10.00AM TO 4.30PM

Henry Sandon Hall WR1 2NE

CELLO DAY AT HENRY SANDON HALL



Cellist Beatrice Harrison and Sir Edward Elgar making the first recording of his Cello Concerto

It seems only fitting that we would start our celebrations of the centenary of Britain's most beloved Cello Concerto with a day unravelling the mysteries of this most human and majestic of instruments.

Young cellists from across Elgar Country gather with cellists of the English Symphony Orchestra, conductor and cellist Kenneth Woods and other guest clinicians for a day of cello masterclasses and workshops, culminating in a free cello ensemble performance at 4:00 PM. It's all free and open to the public, and while you're there, you can play Elgar's piano and have a coffee at The Nest.

Open to the public, no tickets required.

To take part in the Cello Day, please contact:

esoyouth@eso.co.uk

£35/cellists to take part, open to cellists of all abilities under the age of 19

Informal free public performance at 4.00pm. All welcome.



FRIDAY 31 MAY

£10

1.00PM

Lumby Room, Elgar School of Music WR1 2ES

ELGAR IN SONG IN MEMORY OF DONALD HUNT



Maria Moll *Soprano*

Wilhelm Theunissen *Tenor*

Janine Parsons *Piano*

And students of the **Elgar School of Music**

Join us for this lunchtime recital celebrating Elgar in song with the artist faculty of the Elgar School of Music in a programme including the piano version of Elgar's Sea Pictures.

Edward Elgar 1857 - 1934

As I Lay a -Thynkyng (1887)

Two Songs Op. 41 (1902)

- i. In the Dawn
- ii. Speak Music

From "Three Songs: opus 59 (1910)

- i. The King's Way
- ii. Shakespeare's Kingdom (Pageant of Empire) 1924

Sea Pictures Op. 37 (1899)

- i. Sea Slumber Song
- ii. In Haven
- iii. Sabbath Morning at Sea
- iv. Where Corals Lie
- v. The Swimmer

Tickets: £10 (booking charges may apply)

FRIDAY 31 MAY

£7.50
KIDS FREE



7.00PM

Rogers Theatre, Malvern College WR14 3DF

ELGAR FOR EVERYONE FAMILY CONCERT IN MALVERN

ESO Youth Orchestras; James Topp *conductor*

Massed ESO Youth Orchestras

Rondeau from *Abedelazer*

Henry Purcell arr. Iain Farrington

ESO Beginners' Orchestra

The Prince of Denmark's March (Trumpet Voluntary)
Greensleeves

Jeremiah Clarke arr. Leslie Ryan
attrib. King Henry VIII arr. Leslie Ryan

ESO Intermediate Orchestra

Prelude on *Rhosymedre*
Thunderbirds

Ralph Vaughan Williams orch. Arnold Foster
Barry Gray arr. Richard Ling

INTERVAL

ESO Youth Orchestra

Dream Children
Little Suite for Orchestra No. 1
I: Prelude; II: Dance; III: March

Edward Elgar

Malcolm Arnold

Massed ESO Youth Orchestras

Excerpts from *Enigma Variations*
Theme; Ysobel; Troyte; G.R.S.

Edward Elgar arr. Iain Farrington

This event is FREE for accompanied children aged 16 and under. Adults £7.50; Students £4.00

11.00AM

The Firs, Elgar's Birthplace WR2 6RH

ELGAR CHORALE AT THE FIRS



John Rutter A Choral Fanfare (Blow up the trumpet)

Gabriel Fauré Madrigale

Gabriel Fauré Pavane opus 50

Ralph Vaughan Williams Three Shakespeare Songs

1. Full fathom five
2. The cloud-capp'd towers
3. Over hill, over dale

John Rutter from Birthday Madrigals

1. It was a lover and his lass
2. Come live with me
3. When daisies pied

Elgar Chorale

Conductor Piers Maxim

The Elgar Chorale returns to The Firs for a coffee concert featuring popular works by Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Rutter.

Ralph Vaughan Williams from Suite of Six Short Pieces

1. Prelude
2. Slow Air
3. Rondo
4. Mezzo Ostinato

Edward Elgar Part Songs

1. My love dwelt in a Northern Land
2. Serenade

John Rutter A Choral Amen

Piers Maxim *Director/Piano*

ABOUT THE MUSIC

***A Choral Fanfare (Blow up the trumpet)* John Rutter**

Rutter's short setting of words from Psalm 81 is dramatic and colourful. Though written for unaccompanied voices, its arresting vocal flourishes and closely spaced chords could just as easily have been intended for brass instruments, as the 'fanfare' of the title suggests.

***Madrigale* Gabriel Fauré**

Pavane Opus 50

Gabriel Fauré is a very important composer and teacher in the history of French music from the late 19th Century to the early decades of the 20th. He taught many composers who went on to glittering careers, including Ravel and Nadia Boulanger. He was well-known in England and attended the premiere of Elgar's First Symphony in 1908, dining out with the composer afterwards. *Madrigale*, was composed in 1881 and is dedicated to André Messager, another of his pupils. It sets a text by one of Fauré's frequent collaborators, Armand Silvestre. The words pitch the men against the women and vice versa, in accusing each other of cruelty in love. Finally, all four voices sing that everyone suffers the same. Fauré copies this gender battle in his musical setting, starting with the tenors and basses, and shows his great melodic gift from the beginning.

Cruel souls, who, without care, taunt and mock at our despair, seize love when love it seeks you.
Ungrateful ones, cast aside those thoughts that discomfort your pride, seize love when love it seeks you.
Take heed, cruel maidens so fair, that your days of love be not rare. Take heed all you changeable lovers,
for the joys of love are but short! Seize love when love it seeks you. All suffer the same destiny, and our
folly is the same, to love those who from us do flee, and flee those whose love we inflame.

The *Pavane* is perhaps Fauré's most famous work, aside from his *Requiem* (1888-1890). We present it this morning in its original form as a choral work with piano accompaniment. Fauré himself said of it, that it was "elegant, but not otherwise important". This text also sets male up against female, though this time they are dancers ribbing each other – hence the rather obscure comments, such as "Observe the measure" and "The cadence is less slow"!

It is Lindor, it is Tircis, and it is all our victors!
It is Myrtille, it is Lyde! The queens of our hearts.
As they are defying! As they are always proud!
As we dare rule our fates and our days!
Pay attention! Observe the measure!
Oh mortal insult! The cadence is less slow!
And the fall more certain!

We'll make them sing a different tune!
We will soon be their running dogs!
They are ugly! Dear little face!
They are madmen! (Quaint airs and tune!)
And it is always the same, and so forever!
We love! We hate! We curse our loves!
Farewell Myrtille, Egle, Chloe, mocking demons!
Farewell and good day to the tyrants of our hearts!
And a good day!

***Three Shakespeare Songs* Vaughan Williams**

After much persuasion by his fellow composer Cecil Armstrong Gibbs, Vaughan Williams eventually produced the *Three Shakespeare Songs* for the choral competition organised by the British Federation of Music Festivals (of which he was president) as part of the 1951 Festival of Britain. The first piece in the group, the ghostly *Full fathom five*, magically conjures up the effect of underwater bells. This is followed by the majestic *The cloud capp'd towers*, and finally the impish, mercurial *Over hill, over dale*. The second song may well have been inspired by the composer's Sixth Symphony, completed only four years previously. Like the symphony, the original draft of this piece was in E minor, and its shifting E minor/Eb minor harmony is strongly suggestive of the symphony's Epilogue, which the composer himself stated could be summed up in the same lines from *The Tempest*: 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep'.

From *Birthday Madrigals* John Rutter

It was a lover and his lass
Come live with me
When daisies pied

The composition of *Birthday Madrigals* came about when Brian Kay, conductor of the Cheltenham Bach Choir, invited John Rutter to compose a work celebrating the 75th birthday of George Shearing, the great jazz pianist. Rutter took as a starting point a piece he had written in 1975, *It was a lover and his lass*, adding four more movements to complete the set. The first performance was given in Cheltenham Town Hall in June 1995 in the presence of Shearing and conducted by the composer.

We do not normally associate Rutter's name with jazz, but in *Birthday Madrigals* he demonstrates a real feel for the idiom, particularly in the three quicker numbers that we present today. The texts are all by 16th and 17th century writers, and were set as madrigals at the time, hence the title of Rutter's choral suite.

From *Suite of Six Short Pieces* Vaughan Williams

Prelude

Slow Air

Rondo

Pezzo Ostinato

Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Suite of Six Short Pieces* for piano was published in 1921. With its series of short dance movements, it is loosely patterned after the keyboard suites of Bach and Handel. Subsequently the suite was arranged for string orchestra, not by Vaughan Williams himself but with his approval, as the *Charterhouse Suite*, named after the school he attended as a boy.

From *'Three Songs'* Edward Elgar

My love dwelt in a Northern Land

Serenade

My love dwelt in a Northern Land was Elgar's first published part song, in 1890, and marked the beginning of his association with the music publisher, Novello. Elgar took great care in "orchestrating" his vocal parts - providing much expressive detail in his accompanying voices, especially when the Sopranos and Tenors have the melody in octaves during the central section.

Serenade was written during the Elgars' sojourn in London, to where they had moved in 1912. The lower voices provide an accompanying figure, over which the sopranos sing their lyric melody.

A Choral Amen Rutter

This unaccompanied, eight-part setting of the 'Amen' is modelled on Tudor music, with its arched structure and carefully prepared suspensions.



ABOUT THE MUSICIANS



Piers Maxim, Director of Music of the Elgar Chorale

Piers Maxim is Director of Music at Great Malvern Priory and conductor of EC4 Orchestra, based in London. Piers teaches singing, piano, organ and composition in schools around Worcestershire and Herefordshire, and regularly holds choral workshops. His musical career began as a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral, London, followed by studies at Clare College, Cambridge and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. Piers worked extensively in some of the major opera houses and theatres of Europe as conductor, assistant conductor and chorus master. After two years as Chorus Master of Scottish Opera, he was invited to become Chef des Choeurs at La Monnaie, Brussels. As Assistant Conductor to René Jacobs from 1996 to 2012, Piers worked on many operas and oratorios on stage, in concert and in recordings. He conducted *Der Zauberflöte* in New York (2007), the first performance of a staged baroque opera in China (Handel's *Semele* in the Beijing Music Festival 2010), and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Blow's *Venus and Adonis* in Innsbruck (2013).

Piers has composed several notable pieces, including a commission for the Millennium Eve service of celebration at Southwark Cathedral, in the presence of HM Queen Elizabeth II (*And I said to the Man*). His church music is published by the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM).

The Elgar Chorale of Worcester

The Elgar Chorale is a mixed voice choir of up to 40 singers, many of whom are professional musicians. In January 2015, Piers Maxim was appointed Director of Music, only the second person to hold this post after Dr Donald Hunt OBE (1930-2018), who founded the choir in 1980. The choir quickly became noted for its interpretations of music by Sir Edward Elgar. Now established as one of the leading chamber choirs in the West Midlands, the choir continues its tradition of specialising in Elgar part-songs but is also becoming known for the variety of its performances. Its repertoire ranges from medieval to the modern day, from unaccompanied to with a small orchestra.

The choir has often performed in some of Worcestershire's most prestigious music festivals, most memorably at Three Choirs in Worcester and at the Bromsgrove Festival. It has also toured at home and abroad, singing in France, Germany, South Africa and most recently Devon in 2016.

As well as holding its own busy programme each season, the Elgar Chorale is often invited to perform on behalf of charities. Over the years it has raised thousands of pounds for good causes. It is also asked to perform at weddings and on civic occasions. The choir looks forward to celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2020.

www.elgarchorale.com

SATURDAY 1 JUNE

FREE

12.30PM

The Firs, Elgar's Birthplace WR2 6RH

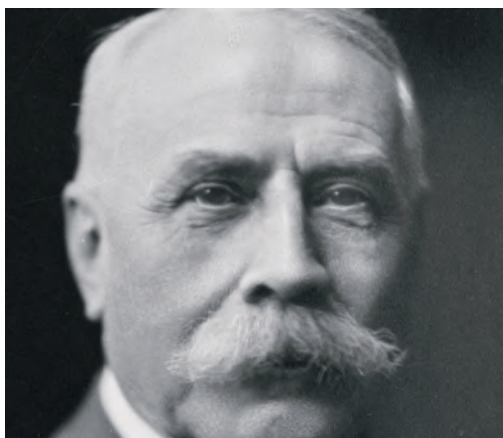
POMP AND POETRY AGAIN

Join us for another instalment in the hugely popular Pomp and Poetry series at The Firs with playwright Peter Sutton and find out why Elgar is for Everyone.



In this, the third and last in the series, the music of Edward Elgar is used as the starting point for a selection of poetry in a programme compiled by Stella and Stuart Freed. Once again, the poems will be read by actor, playwright and Elgar Society member Peter Sutton and will include poems by Robert Graves, WB Yeats and James Leigh Hunt with selections of music that include The Empire March, Carissima and the Bavarian Dances.

This event is FREE but TICKETED



SATURDAY 1 JUNE

£12

3.00PM

Chapter House, Worcester Cathedral, 8 College Yard, Worcester WR1 2LA

PROTEUS ENSEMBLE AT WORCESTER CATHEDRAL



One of the UK's leading professional choirs presents an afternoon programme featuring some of the highlights of Elgar's choral music.

GO, SONG OF MINE

Proteus Ensemble

Conductor – Stephen Shellard

Gabrielle Bullock – Reader/Richard Cook Accompanist

Given in memory of Donald Hunt.

A concert of sacred and secular music by Edward Elgar (1857 – 1934)

O Happy eyes

My love Dwelt in a Northern Land

As Torrents in Summer

Spanish Serenade

Angelus

Ave Verum

O Wild West Wind

The Shower

Nimrod

They are at Rest

The Spirit of the Lord

Light of the World

(interspersed with poems and readings)

Performers

Sopranos – Alison Shone, Vicki Field

Altos – Matthew Reeve, Mark Wilson

Tenor – David Barclay, Richard Jeremy

Bass – Tom Hunt, Stephen Grice

Accompanist – Richard Cook

Reader – Gabrielle Bullock

Conductor – Stephen Shellard

Tickets: £12

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The appointment of Donald Hunt as organist and master of the choristers at Worcester Cathedral in 1975 ushered in a golden time for music making in the city and beyond. He was the director of no less than eight Worcester Three Choirs' Festivals and his programming of both old and new music was the hallmark of a very special time in the history of the festival. At the heart of all Hunt's music making was his deep love and unique insight into the music of Edward Elgar. He conducted all the major choral works and with the Donald Hunt Singers (known as the Elgar Chorale after his retirement from the cathedral), 'Donald Hunt and Friends', and the Cathedral Choir, he explored in both concert and on LP/CD, the smaller scale sacred and secular vocal works. On his death in 2018 there appeared multiple appreciations of his life and work and many chose to concentrate on his particular affinity and love of the music of Elgar. Retirement was a time of prolific work, not least the scholarly editing of the complete part songs for Novello's Elgar Complete Edition in 2014, and in 2017 the editing of 12 of Elgar's sacred pieces for Cramer music publishing house. Today's concert is a small celebration of some of the more intimate sacred and secular works of his beloved Elgar coupled with poems and readings that Donald himself programmed in similar concerts throughout his long and distinguished career.

ABOUT THE MUSICIANS

The Proteus Ensemble was founded by Stephen Shellard in 2013 and consists of professional singers drawn from all parts of the UK. Named after the Greek sea – god Proteus, the group takes its musical *raison d'être* from the adjective 'protean' which means 'versatile' or capable of assuming many forms. The group's first CD, on Regent Records, entitled 'Serenity, Courage, Wisdom', was recorded in Worcester Cathedral and launched at their inaugural concert in Pershore Abbey as part of the 2014 Worcester Three Choirs Festival. It was met with unanimous praise in the musical press with MusicWeb describing it as 'a disc...for profound literary and musical enjoyment'. The group's second disc of music by the contemporary composer Paul Fisher is newly released on the Regent Records label.



Stephen Shellard comes from Dublin. He began his musical career as a chorister St Patrick's Cathedral. He continued his musical education at Trinity College Dublin, becoming the youngest ever Alto Lay Vicar Choral in St Patrick's 800-year history. In 1990 Stephen joined Worcester Cathedral Choir where he is now Senior Lay Clerk. As a counter-tenor, his solo career has included working with the Worcester Festival Choral Society and many other choral societies. He has sung and recorded with specialist early music ensemble Musica Contexta while other solo engagements have included Britten's Abraham and Isaac, Handel's Messiah with Sir David Willcocks and Bach's St Matthew Passion with the Armonico Consort, of which he was a founder member. In 1998 Stephen founded the Worcester Cathedral Chamber Choir and made his orchestral conducting debut in Worcester Cathedral in March 2000 with the combined Chamber and Cathedral Choirs and London's Westminster Chamber Orchestra in Bach's St John Passion. He has developed the choir's repertoire and conducted them in performances including Brahms' Requiem (two-pianos version), Handel's Messiah, Haydn's Nelson Mass and Duruflé's Requiem and in several recordings. Stephen formed the Worcester Chamber Orchestra to perform with the Chamber Choir and also has a thriving teaching career.

5.30PM

Worcester Cathedral WR1 2LA

CHORAL EVENSONG AT WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

Evensong sung by Poscimur Choir

Free and open to the public

POSCIMUR (meaning “we are called”) was formed in 1991 with the specific aim of singing services in cathedrals. Since its inception the choir has sung in more than thirty of the English Cathedrals – several times in most of them. Although the choir is essentially based in South East London and practises there regularly, members are drawn from across the country, learning the music in their own time. The choir, affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music, sings at approximately ten venues annually. It does not receive any grants or financial assistance and holds one fund-raising event each year. We currently have a total of over 50 members drawn from all over the UK. All members have been, or still are, choristers in Church or Cathedral choirs. We sing Anglican Church music chosen from an extensive repertoire covering composers from the 16th to the 21st centuries. Music for the service includes Elgar’s *O salutaris hostia*

6.00PM

Henry Sandon Hall WR1 2NE

PRE-CONCERT CONVERSATION AT HENRY SANDON HALL



Guest speakers:

Donald Fraser *Visiting composer*

J.P.E Harper-Scott *Professor of Music
History and Theory – Royal Holloway
University, Author*

J.P.E Harper-Scott, Professor of Music History and Theory at Royal Holloway, University of London is General Editor of the Cambridge University Press series ‘Music in Context’ and one of today’s most admired experts on Elgar’s life and music, the author of *Elgar - An Extraordinary Life, Edward Elgar, Modernist* and the editor of *Elgar Studies* (Cambridge University Press). He will be discussing Elgar’s Cello Concerto, providing a listening guide to the work with audio and video examples.

Donald Fraser, the Elgar Festival’s 2019 Visiting Composer, will be talking about Elgar’s music and Fraser’s long involvement with Elgar as a performer, arranger and orchestrator. Fraser’s orchestration of the Elgar Piano Quintet was hailed by *Classical Music Magazine* as a 2015 Premiere of the Year.

SATURDAY 1 JUNE

£0-£25

7.30PM

Worcester Cathedral WR1 2LA

FESTIVAL GALA CONCERT THE ELGAR CELLO CONCERTO 100TH ANNIVERSARY PERFORMANCE



English Symphony Orchestra

Kenneth Woods *Conductor*

Raphael Wallfisch *Cello*

Worcester Cathedral Chamber Choir

(Stephen Shellard Dir.)

Elgar: *Sea Pictures* *(choral arr. Donald Fraser)*

Vaughan Williams: *Fifth Symphony*

Interval

Elgar: *Cello Concerto*

Elgar's Cello Concerto, his last large-scale completed work, was not a success at its premiere in 1919, but in the century since it was written, it has become one of the most admired and beloved pieces in all classical music. Thanks to the advocacy of legendary cellists from Beatrice Harrison and Jaqueline Du Pré to Sheku Kanneh-Mason and tonight's soloist, Raphael Wallfisch, it has won the hearts of countless millions of listeners worldwide. Our celebration of the centenary of this iconic work promises to be the highlight of the 2019 Elgar Festival. The concert includes one of the most beautiful of British symphonies, Vaughan Williams' Fifth Symphony. Like Elgar's Cello Concerto, this symphony is a wartime work of deep contemplation and subtle beauty.

Ticket £25, £20, £15 and £10. Booking charges may apply



PROGRAMME

Sea Pictures, Opus 37

- i. "Sea Slumber Song" by Roden Noel
- ii. "In Haven (Capri)" by Caroline Alice Elgar
- iii. "Sabbath Morning at Sea" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning
- iv. "Where Corals Lie" by Richard Garnett
- v. "The Swimmer" by Adam Lindsay Gordon

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)
Arr. Donald Fraser

Symphony no. 5 in D Major

- i. Preludio
- ii. Scherzo
- iii. Romanza
- iv. Passacaglia

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

INTERVAL (20 Minutes)

Concerto in E minor for Cello and Orchestra, Opus 85

- i. Adagio – Moderato
- ii. Lento – Allegro molto
- iii. Adagio
- iv. Allegro – Moderato – Allegro, ma non-troppo – Poco più lento – Adagio

Edward Elgar

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Edward Elgar would not, at first glance, seem a composer likely to have written one of the greatest song cycles in the English language, as it was a genre he attempted only once, compared with the many memorable cycles written by the likes of Schubert, Schumann, Wolf, Mahler and his fellow Englishmen Britten and Vaughan Williams. In fact, Elgar seemed a composer content to write one or two staggering masterpieces in each genre and then leave it behind, and so we have from him two concertos, two symphonies, two chamber works for strings, two big overtures and two big orchestral tone poems. **Sea Pictures**, however, stands alone. The work was commissioned by the Norfolk and Norwich Festival, where Elgar conducted the premiere in 1899. It thus sits between two of his most important works, the Enigma Variations, which preceded it, and the Dream of Gerontius, which followed. Elgar had originally conceived the cycle for soprano, changing course and keys on encountering the great contralto Clara Butt, who sang the first performance, dressed, we are told, as a mermaid. Commentators have long been struck by the cycle's incredible unity of design. The songs are thematically linked in all kinds of subtle and intricate ways, some easy to hear, some more hidden. This sort of all-encompassing perfection of construction somewhat belies the fact that the cycle combined new material with songs written earlier. In 1883, Elgar sketched out the musical idea which would eventually become the opening of 'Sabbath Morning at Sea'. In 1897, he set a poem by his wife, Alice, as 'Lute Song', published in 1898. Although many have been tempted to use this touching song as a window into Alice and Edward's complex but deeply loving relationship, she'd actually written the poem before meeting Elgar. When Elgar submitted the original version to Novello in 1897, it was they who suggested he expand it and increase the use of sea imagery in the text, which Alice did. So it was that this cycle's focus on the sea had an almost accidental beginning. The sea is not the only idea that unifies the five poems by five poets set by Elgar in this cycle. All five also ask complicated questions about our relationship with time, love and death. In each song there is an element of existing in a dangerous and uncertain present ('Closely cling, for waves beat fast'), looking back to an idealised past ('The skies were fairer, the shores were firmer'), and defiantly embracing a fight for the future ('I would ride as never man has ridden'). Richard Garnett's poem 'Where Corals Lie' inspired Elgar to create one of the most subtle and touching meditations on death in all art ('Yes, press my eyelids close, 'tis well'). In *Sea Pictures* death is both menacing and comforting, something both feared and embraced. Throughout the five songs Elgar also responds powerfully to the musicality of the texts themselves, particularly each poet's use of alliteration, which does a great deal to generate the rhythmic ebb and flow of the music, from the 'Sea birds are asleep' of 'Sea Slumber Song' to the 'short, sharp, violent lights' of 'The Swimmer'.

If critics and commentators have been relatively quick to recognise the success of Elgar's work in thematically linking the songs across the cycle, many have been slower to perceive the moment-to-moment integration of ideas between the vocal and orchestral writing. Some have even gone so far as to suggest that Elgar's masterful use of the orchestra is employed to somehow paper over certain shortcomings in the piece. In this respect, Donald Fraser's new arrangement of the work for chorus and strings brings to the fore an overlooked aspect of Elgar's



genius. Where Elgar's original pits a solo voice (and the contralto has the most distinctive of all vocal timbres) against a large, heterogeneous orchestra, which makes great use of the colouristic possibilities of solo wind instruments, harp, percussion and widely varied use of strings, Fraser opts for the homogeneity of three very similar musical groups: an SATB choir, a string orchestra and a string quartet. If we lose some of the technicolor sparkle of Elgar's original, we hear instead a new focus on the unity of the original vocal line with all the material that surrounds it. It's by no means intended as an improvement, but it is deeply illuminating nonetheless. Fraser says of this arrangement:

"On a creative level the foremost element of this orchestration was related to the title:

"... PICTURES. Not songs, not a quotation from the lyrics, not a suite or a cycle! ... simply PICTURES. The original orchestration so clearly adheres to this concept ... it was important to keep this in any further arrangement. I thought often of the pictures of Turner when working on this piece: the Storm at Sea, the picture of Aldeburgh harbour, The Shipwreck and so many others of his 'Sea Pictures'. How clever is Elgar's original in this regard. The use of tam-tam and low strings as 'undertow' in the 'Sea Slumber Song', when we hear the voice of the 'mother' ocean calming her children, the splashing waves of the white horses, the shifting underwater fronds of the corals ... so many impressions. The lines of the chorus, as well as those of the quartet, follow this line of thinking, colouring in their own way the images derived from the poems. On a practical level I chose, for the strings and SATB version, to utilise the same forces that Elgar had employed in his Introduction and Allegro."

Kenneth Woods

In 1952, when **Vaughan Williams** was asked to pick one of his symphonies for a special concert celebrating his 80th birthday, he chose the **Fifth Symphony**. That this work would hold a special place in its creator's heart should not surprise us. No other work of his had such a long and complex gestation with such profound connections to his earlier works, nor is there any work which so perfectly captures his most personal and distinctive of musical languages. I vividly remember our former composer-in-association John McCabe telling me that he held RVW to be "the greatest 20th Century symphonist, bar none." At first, I was stunned by John's suggestion – what about Mahler, Shostakovich, Nielsen and even our own Edward Elgar? But if one is looking to make John's case for RVW's symphonic supremacy, the Fifth Symphony is surely the place to start.

Vaughan Williams began sketching the Fifth Symphony in 1936, and by 1938 was fully engrossed in the score. Progress on the Fifth was slowed by numerous external factors. Vaughan Williams, who had served as a medical orderly in World War I soon became involved in the efforts of the new World War, and also had to meet deadlines for several film scores and shorter pieces, including the *Serenade to Music* and *Five Variants of 'Dives and Lazarus'*. He finally completed the symphony in early 1943 and revised it in 1952. The work is dedicated "Without permission and with the sincerest of flattery to Jean Sibelius, whose great example is worthy of imitation." It was premiered at the Proms under the composer's baton by the London Philharmonic at the 1943 Proms.

Although the Fifth Symphony was begun in 1936, the work has significant thematic connections with his opera, or 'morality' as he often called it, *Pilgrim's Progress*, which he worked on from 1909-1952.

The dedication to Sibelius serves as a worthy signal of the work's seriousness of purpose. Musicologist Michael Steinberg writes that for Vaughan Williams, as for Sibelius, "the symphony was *the* form in which a composer might express his deepest, most complex, most personal feelings and realise his richest and most evolved compositional plans."

The work is outwardly abstract, but the many references to *Pilgrim's Progress*, other works from his catalogue and his biographical circumstances paint a picture of a multi-layered work from a composer who was both uplifted by newly found love and in despair at the return of war.

An early version of the first movement of the symphony was called *Funeral March for the Old Order*, but the mood is perhaps more gently melancholy than militaristic. It's certainly about as far as you can get from the many funeral marches which populate the symphonies of Gustav Mahler (whose music he loathed). Like much of his music, Vaughan Williams finds emotional texture in the ambiguities of modal harmony. The symphony opens with a gently rocking horn fanfare in D major, but the horns' bittersweet but hopeful melody is somewhat undermined by C natural in the low strings which underpins the opening. That C turns the music in a dark direction, moving it through C minor

before there bursts forth an aspiring violin melody in E major. This is a quote from the “Alleluia” Vaughan Williams wrote in 1906 for The *English Hymnal*, a fragment he had already quoted in several other works.

The *Scherzo* is both shadowy and virtuosic, dark and wickedly playful. Vaughan Williams called his early sketch of it *Exit of the Ghosts of the Past*, and ghostly it is. It is followed by what must be one of the most touching symphonic slow movements of the last 100 years, the *Romanza*. Some commentators have read the title of the movement as a reference to his new-found love and future wife, Ursula, but it is also in this movement that the connections to *Pilgrim's Progress* are most telling. He wrote a passage taken from Bunyan's novel into his manuscript at the top of the *Romanza*: “Upon this place stood a cross, and a little below a sepulcher. Then he said: ‘He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death.’” In the opera, those words are given to the same poignant melody the English horn plays to launch this movement. Later, there is an anguished passage in a faster tempo which, in RVW's *Pilgrim's Progress*, is associated with the Pilgrim's words “Save me, Lord, my burden is greater than I can bear.”

The Finale is a passacaglia worthy of consideration in the same breath as that other great symphonic passacaglia which ends Brahms Fourth Symphony. Where Brahms' uses the passacaglia's repeating structure to create a sense of driving headlong into unavoidable catastrophe, Vaughan Williams turns the passacaglia into something like a rite of purification. Gradually, he strips away the modal colourations which have given the symphony so much of its character, moving toward pure, almost Bach-ian D Major. The horn calls which opened the symphony now return in blazing fortissimo and one more “Alleluia” sounds from the hymn *All Creatures of Our God and King*. Michael Steinberg describes the ending better than I can: “In peaceful meditation... the music arrives at its destination: a luminous D major close, hushed, beatific, with an ineffable sense of peace. Here, if anywhere in music, is transcendence.”

Kenneth Woods

Edward Elgar wrote his Cello Concerto in the summer of 1919. It was to be his last major orchestral work - and without Elgar's wife, Alice, even this concerto would have remained unwritten. He was shaken by the War, and sensed that the times were against him. Alice Elgar realized that he needed peace and seclusion if he was to write music again, so in May 1917 found him Brinkwells, West Sussex - a woodland cottage deep amongst the South Downs.

Sure enough, he composed once more, but a very different kind of music to his pre-war masterpieces. In 1918 he wrote his Violin Sonata, String Quartet, and Piano Quintet. Alice called it “wood magic”, and the same could go for the Cello Concerto - written the following summer, and in its own way, just as much a piece of chamber music. It was premiered on 27th October 1919. Elgar was not given sufficient rehearsal time, and the audience didn't want to hear “new” music; the hall was half-empty. A week later, Alice Elgar fell into her final illness. With her death the following April, Elgar's composing career was effectively over.

For many years after that première, the Cello Concerto was widely regarded as an understated piece, uncharacteristic, even uninspired. Now it's a different story – it's seen almost as a musical equivalent of Wilfred Owen's war poetry, its quiet intimacy forgotten. Neither view is quite right. The Concerto isn't a public lament, but a private meditation, full of sweetness, moments of hope and even (in the second and fourth movements) humour. The composer and critic Donald Tovey called it a "fairy-tale", and it is worth remembering that this music was conceived in solitude, amongst wooded hills. Throughout his life, Elgar was always most himself when lost in the countryside with his own thoughts. This concerto's emotions came from deep within him.

How else to account for the impact of this haunted music? So much of it is quiet – Elgar's biographer Michael Kennedy called the long, singing theme of the first movement (after the cello's impassioned opening cry) "music of falling leaves and autumn smoke". There's something mysterious, too, about the second movement, which, after a few false starts and pauses for thought, speeds away as a fantastic *scherzo*, finally vanishing like a bursting bubble. There's laughter as well as tears in this Concerto – even if the short, infinitely tender *Adagio* runs too deep for either.

So the angry, bustling opening of the *finale* comes as something of shock – as does the good humour that begins to surface in the least likely places. But at the peak of the movement, the sky darkens, and the cello pours out a pained lament over bitter harmonies. You can't mistake this emotion – and though Elgar himself never admitted it, the cello is singing over the very chords with which he'd accompanied The Angel of the Agony in *The Dream of Gerontius*, twenty years before, and in another life. The feelings are almost too strong; the mood suddenly snaps and Elgar puts an end to it with a few brusque, angry bars of dismissal.

Richard Bratby



ABOUT THE ARTISTS



RAPHAEL WALLFISCH CELLO

Raphael Wallfisch is one of the most celebrated cellists performing on the international stage. He was born in London into a family of distinguished musicians, his mother the cellist Anita Lasker-Wallfisch and his father the pianist Peter Wallfisch.

At an early age, Raphael was greatly inspired by hearing Zara Nelsova play, and, guided by a succession of fine teachers including Amaryllis Fleming, Amadeo Baldovino and Derek Simpson, it became apparent that the cello was to be his life's work. While studying with the great Russian cellist Gregor Piatigorsky in California, he was chosen to perform chamber music with Jascha Heifetz in the informal recitals that Piatigorsky held at his home.

At the age of twenty-four he won the Gaspar Cassadó International Cello Competition in Florence. Since then he has enjoyed a world-wide career playing with such orchestras as the London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia, BBC Symphony, English Chamber Orchestra, Hallé, City of Birmingham Symphony, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Berlin Symphony, Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Indianapolis Symphony, Warsaw Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic and many others.

He is regularly invited to play at major festivals such as the BBC Proms, Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Spoleto, Prades, Oslo and Schleswig Holstein. He is also frequently invited to be a jury member of international competitions such as the Rostropovich International Competition in Paris, the Schoenfeld in China and the Enescu in Romania.

Teaching is one of Raphael's passions. He is in demand as a teacher all over the world and holds the position of professor of cello in Switzerland at the Zürich Hochschule der Kunst.

Raphael has recorded nearly every major work for his instrument. His extensive discography on EMI, Chandos, Black Box, ASV, Naxos and Nimbus explores both the mainstream concerto repertoire and countless lesser-known works by Dohnanyi, Respighi, Barber, Hindemith and Martinu, as well as Richard Strauss, Dvorak, Kabalevsky and Khachaturian. He has recorded a wide range of British cello concertos, including works by MacMillan, Finzi, Delius, Bax, Bliss, Britten, Moeran and Kenneth Leighton. For the Chandos Walton Edition he was privileged to record the composer's Cello Concerto, originally written for his master, Piatigorsky.

Britain's leading composers have worked closely with Raphael, many having written works especially for him.

These include Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Kenneth Leighton, James MacMillan, John Metcalf, Paul Patterson, Robert Simpson, Robert Saxton, Roger Smalley, Giles Swayne, John Tavener and Adrian Williams.

Alongside his solo career, Raphael has a long-standing and distinguished duo with pianist John York. With a rich history of many international recital tours and numerous recordings, the duo celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2017 and look forward to future collaboration in 2018. Raphael also greatly enjoys touring with his very successful piano trio – Trio Shaham Erez Wallfisch – which he and his colleagues Hagai Shaham (violin) and Arnon Erez (piano) founded in 2009. Four recordings have been released so far, each receiving the highest critical acclaim.

Raphael plays a 1760 Gennaro Gagliano, the 1733 Montagnana “Ex-Romberg” and an exquisite modern cello built for Raphael by Patrick Robin. He lives in London with his wife, the violinist Elizabeth, and has three children, Benjamin, Simon, and Joanna.

www.rafaelwallfisch.com



WORCESTER CATHEDRAL CHAMBER CHOIR

Worcester Cathedral Chamber Choir has celebrated its 20th anniversary since it was founded by its present day conductor, Stephen Shellard. The choir has established a reputation for musical sensitivity and ground-breaking performance as well an acclaimed recording catalogue.

Always a mixed-voice choir of about 30 singers, its 1998 creation marked the first time women’s voices were included in the musical life of the cathedral since its foundation about 900 years ago.

The concert repertoire includes staples such as Handel’s Messiah and Fauré’s Requiem,

but, unafraid to push boundaries, a performance of Arvo Pärt’s Passion was widely acclaimed and works from contemporary composers have also been commissioned for concerts and services.

A healthy recording schedule has seen CDs including *Hodie: Music from Advent to Christmas Day*, *Rise Heart* and *Royal Worcester: A Celebration of Music for Royal Occasions*, well received in the UK and abroad.

The choir undertakes an increasing number of education and outreach initiatives and tours have included concerts and services in Dublin and Norfolk. It was widely acclaimed for its part in the 2012/13 Christmas broadcasts and Gloucester and Worcester Cathedrals’ Mystery Plays. The choir has been heard across the country thanks to broadcasts from its CDs on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM.

www.worcestercathedralchamberchoir.co.uk



KENNETH WOODS

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Hailed by Gramophone as a “symphonic conductor of stature,” conductor, cellist, composer and author **Kenneth Woods** has worked with the National Symphony Orchestra (USA), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and English Chamber Orchestra. He has also appeared on the stages of some of the world’s leading music festivals, including Aspen, Scotia and Lucerne. In 2013, he took up a new position as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the English Symphony Orchestra. In 2015 he became the second Artistic Director of the Colorado MahlerFest, the only American organization other than the New York Philharmonic to receive the Gold Medal of the International Gustav Mahler Society.

Woods was appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Orchestra of the Swan in 2010 and during his tenure lifted that orchestra to a new level of international renown. With them, he recorded the first complete cycle of the symphonies of Hans Gál paired with those of Robert Schumann, among the most widely praised classical recording projects in recent years, highlighted in National Public Radio’s All Things Considered, Performance Today, BBC Radio 3, the Sunday New York Times, the Sunday Telegraph, Washington Post and was an Editor’s Choice in Gramophone. Among his other recordings are Schoenberg’s chamber ensemble versions of *Das Lied von der Erde* and *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (for Somm) by Gustav Mahler, which won the coveted IRR Outstanding rosette from International Record Review, and *Spring Sounds, Spring Seas*, a MusicWeb ‘Record of the Year’. His recordings with the English Symphony Orchestra and English String Orchestra include the Elgar Piano Quintet as orchestrated by Donald Fraser, and the complete piano concertos of Ernst Krenek, a Sunday Times “Best of 2016.”

A widely read writer and frequent broadcaster, Woods’ blog, *A View from the Podium*, is one of the 25 most popular classical blogs in the world. He has spoken on Mahler on NPR’s All Things Considered and BBC Radio 4’s Today Programme and is a frequent commentator on BBC Radio 3.

www.kennethwoods.net



THE ESO

ENGLISH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Worcestershire based English Symphony Orchestra, the International Orchestra of Elgar Country, is an ensemble which in recent years has become synonymous with artistic excellence, innovative and visionary programming, distinctive commissioning, ground-breaking recording, a welcoming and immersive concert experience, transformative youth programmes and service to the community.

Since the appointment of Kenneth Woods as the orchestra's Artistic Director and Principal Conductor in 2013, the orchestra has re-emerged as a major force in British musical life, presenting and recording the orchestra's first full-length opera (the world premiere of John Joubert's *Jane Eyre*) to overwhelming critical acclaim, presenting

the 2015 Classical Music Magazine "Premiere of the Year," and releasing a triumphant series of recordings including Donald Fraser's orchestration of the Elgar Piano Quintet (Classic FM Disc of the Week) and the Complete Piano Concertos of Ernst Krenek (Sunday Times Essential New Release).

Founded by William Boughton in 1978, the ESO have a long and distinguished history of collaboration with legendary figures of British music making. Vernon "Tod" Handley became the orchestra's second Principal Conductor in 2007, and led the orchestra until his death. Over the years, the ESO has worked with a distinguished list of instrumentalists, composers and conductors, including Nigel Kennedy, Stephen Isserlis, Daniel Hope, Michael Tippett, Nicholas Maw and Yehudi Menuhin, who was appointed the ESO's Principal Guest Conductor in 1991, and led the orchestra on a number of international tours.

British music has always been a central part of the orchestra's mission. Appropriately for an orchestra based in Elgar's home town, the ESO has made many acclaimed recordings of that composer's music, as well as that of major 20th century British composers including Vaughan Williams, Britten, Butterworth and Bridge. The ESO discography also highlights a commitment to the music of our time; in addition to the notable recordings which grew out of the orchestra's affiliation with Sir Michael Tippett, are recordings of music by John Metcalfe, John Joubert, and Michael and Lennox Berkeley. The ESO's discography also includes Baroque masters such as Boyce and Handel, and composers as diverse as Schnittke, Strauss, Shostakovich, Sibelius and Respighi. Kenneth Woods

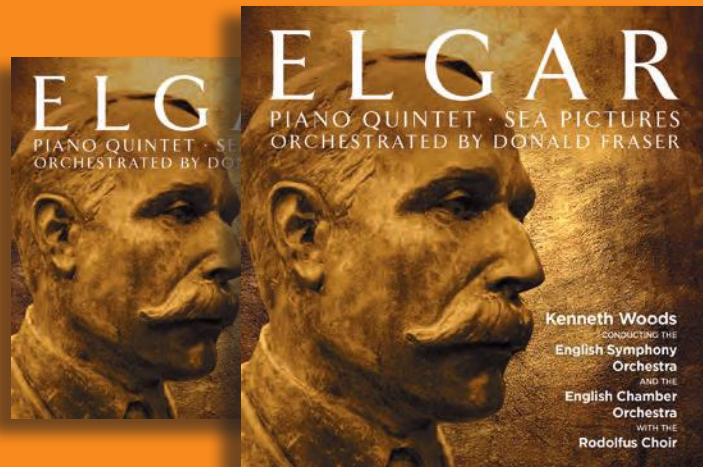
brings to the ESO a particular grounding in the core Central European and Russian repertoire alongside a life-long interest in British music, and the composers of his home country of America.

Woods is a noted advocate for the generation of composers killed or exiled during World War II, and works by composers including Hans Gál, Viktor Ullmann, Mieczyslaw Weinberg feature prominently in the orchestra's current concert offerings and upcoming recordings. John McCabe served as the orchestra's Composer-in-Association from 2013 until his death in 2015. Following McCabe's death in 2015, the ESO appointed Philip Sawyers as "John McCabe Composer-in-Association" who was succeeded by David Matthews in 2018.

Other recent recording projects include a disc of newly-commissioned works for trumpet, piano and strings with Simon Desbruslais and Clare Hammond for Signum, the Hans Gál Concertino for Cello and Orchestra with Matthew Sharp, new violin concerti by David Matthews, Paul Patterson, Rob Fokkens and Emily Doolittle with Harriet Mackenzie and the Third Symphony of Philip Sawyers. Highlights of recent seasons include triumphant debuts in LSO St Luke's, St John's Smith Square, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bridgewater Hall, King's Place and Cheltenham Town Hall.

One of our aims is to develop the audience and the musicians of the future. We run orchestra courses for children from Grade 1 and, when it is feasible, train talented young players to perform alongside the professional orchestra for a part of a concert. ESO has recently (April 2015) been appointed "Orchestra-in-Association" by Severn Arts Music and has very close links with the Elgar School of Music. In 2016-7, the ESO became "Orchestra in Residence" for Worcester Live. In Herefordshire, the ESO works in strategic partnership with the Herefordshire Music Hub and Hereford Sixth form College. Each year, the ESO presents dozens of concerts in care homes and hospices across the Midlands, bringing the comfort of live music to those who need it most.

**AVAILABLE
ON CD AND
SPOTIFY:
ELGAR FROM THE ESO**



SEA PICTURES

Sea Slumber Song

Sea birds are asleep,
The world forgets to weep,
Sea murmurs her soft slumber song
On the shadowy sand
Of this elfin land;

'I, the mother mild,
Hush thee, O my child,
Forget the voices wild!
Hush thee, O my child.

Isles in elfin light
Dream, the rocks and caves,
Lull'd by whispering waves,
Veil their marbles bright,
Foam glimmers faintly white
Upon the shelly sand
Of this elfin land;

Sea sound, like violins,
To slumber woos and wins,
I murmur my soft slumber song,
Leave woes, and wails, and sins,
Ocean's shadowy might
Breathes good-night.
Good-night...'

Roden Noel (1834–1894)

In Haven (Capri)

Closely let me hold thy hand,
Storms are sweeping sea and land;
Love alone will stand.

Closely cling, for waves beat fast,
Foam-flakes cloud the hurrying blast;

Love alone will last.
Kiss my lips, and softly say:
'Joy, sea-swept, may fade to-day;
Love alone will stay.'

Caroline Alice, Lady Elgar (1848–1920)

Sabbath Morning at Sea

The ship went on with solemn face;
To meet the darkness of the deep,
The solemn ship went onward.

I bowed down weary in the place;
For parting tears and present sleep
Had weighed mine eyelids downward.

The new sight, the new wondrous sight!
The waters around me, turbulent,
The skies, impassive o'er me,

Calm in a moonless, sunless light,
As glorified by even the intent
Of holding the glory!

Love me, sweet friends, this Sabbath day.
The sea sings round me while ye roll
Afar, the hymn unaltered,

And kneel, where once I knelt to pray,
And bless me deeper in your soul
Because your voice has faltered.

And though this sabbath comes to me
Without the stolèd minister,
And chanting congregation,

God's spirit shall give comfort. He
who brooded soft on waters drear,
Creator on creation.

He shall assist me to look higher,
where keep the saints, with harp and
song,
An endless sabbath morning,

And, on that sea commixed with fire,
Oft drop their eyelids raised too long
To the full Godhead's burning.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861)

Where Corals Lie

The deeps have music soft and low
When winds awake the airy spry,
It lures me, lures me on to go
And see the land where corals lie.

By mount and mead, by lawn and rill,
When night is deep, and moon is high,
That music seeks and finds me still,
And tells me where the corals lie.

Yes, press my eyelids close, 'tis well,
But far the rapid fancies fly
To rolling worlds of wave and shell,
And all the land where corals lie.

Thy lips are like a sunset glow,
Thy smile is like a morning sky,
Yet leave me, leave me, let me go
And see the land where corals lie.

Richard Garnett (1835-1906)

The Swimmer

With short, sharp, violent lights made vivid,
To southward far as the sight can roam;
Only the swirl of the surges livid,
-The seas that climb and the
surfs that comb.
Only the crag and the cliff to nor'ward,
The rocks receding, and reefs flung forward,
Waifs wrecked seaward and wasted shoreward
On shallows sheeted with flaming foam.

A grim, grey coast and a seaboard ghastly,
And shores trod seldom by feet of men –
Where the batter'd hull and broken mast lie,
They have lain embedded these long years ten.
Love! when we wandered here together,
Hand in hand through the sparkling weather,
From the heights and hollows of fern and heather,
God surely loved us a little then.

The skies were fairer, the shores were firmer –
The blue sea over the bright sand rolled;
Babble and prattle, and ripple and murmur,
Sheen of silver and glamour of gold –

So, girt with tempest and winged with thunder,
And clad with lightning and shod with sleet,
And strong winds treading the swift waves under
Thy flying rollers with frothy feet.
One gleam like a bloodshot sword-blade swims on
The skyline, staining the green gulf crimson,
A death stroke fiercely dealt by a dim sun,
That strikes through his stormy winding-sheet.

Oh! brave white horses! you gather and gallop,
The storm sprite loosens the gusty reins;
Now the stoutest ship were the frailest shallop
In your hollow backs, on your high arched manes.
I would ride as never man has ridden
In your sleepy, swirling surges hidden,
To gulfs foreshadowed through strifes forbidden,
Where no light wearies and no love wanes.

Adam Lindsay Gordon (1833-1870)

11.00AM

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester WR1 2ES

COFFEE CONCERT - ELGAR'S VIOLIN SONATA WITH ZOË BEYERS AND PHILIP MOORE

Beautiful wartime sonatas by Elgar and Debussy frame David Matthews' Romanza in this engaging coffee concert with violin virtuoso Zoë Beyers and pianist Philip Moore.

Zoë Beyers *Violin*

Philip Moore *Piano*

Sonata in G minor for violin and piano, L140 (1917)

I. Allegro vivo

II. Intermède: Fantasque et léger

III. Finale: Très animé

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Romanza for violin and piano, Op. 119a

David Matthews (b. 1943)

Sonata in E minor for violin and piano, Op. 82 (1918)

Allegro risoluto

Romance: Andante

Allegro non troppo

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Introduced by the performers; Duration c. 60 minutes, no interval
Tickets £12

When we think of the First World War, it's fair to say that the music of **Claude Debussy** is not, generally, our mental soundtrack. Yet Debussy's Cello Sonata was written in 1915 and – astonishingly, when we listen to the music - is the product of a national feeling as powerful as anything by Kipling or Elgar. Debussy's initial response to the outbreak of war had been a withdrawal from composition, as too trivial an occupation for so grave a time. But he was terminally ill, and, aware that music was the mainspring of his life, looked for a justification for continuing to write while the nation fought. By the summer of 1915 he'd found one: "it would be a form of cowardice to think only of the horrors being committed, without trying to react by creating, to the best of my ability, a little of that beauty against which the enemy rages". He announced a series of six instrumental sonatas, each to be published under the name of "Claude Debussy, *musicien français*" and intended "as proof, however slight, that, even if there were 30 million *Boches*, French thought is indestructible".

He completed the Cello Sonata in late summer 1915, and turned immediately to the next in the set, the Sonata for flute, viola and harp, completing it before Christmas. By early 1916, though, Debussy was at a low ebb: money was a concern, and his illness was entering its terminal phase. It took Debussy over a year to complete the three concise movements that make up the third, for violin and piano, and he revised it at least six times. The sonata's premiere on 5 May 1917, with the violinist Gaston Poulet – a concert at the *Salle Gaveau* in aid of a soldiers' charity - would be his final appearance in Paris as a pianist, and the sonata would be his last work. "Beware in future of works which appear to inhabit the skies; often they are the product of a dark, morose mind" he wrote to his friend Robert Godet. "I only wrote this sonata to be rid of the thing, spurred on by my dear publisher. This sonata will be interesting from a documentary point of view and as an example of what may be produced by a sick man in time of war."

None of this is evident in the sonata itself, with its quietly controlled emotion, its brief, dark flashes of Debussy's "Spanish" idiom, its darting central *Intermède*, and the euphoric light and ominous shade of the *finale*. For Debussy, even at the last, expression was inseparable from craftsmanship. If, at times, we glimpse the abyss behind the exquisite polish, the glittering fantasy and the sudden, impassioned outbursts, Debussy never once slips towards the edge.

Richard Bratby

Romanza for Violin and Strings, opus 119 - Matthews

This is my second piece with that title; the first was for cello and small orchestra, composed in 1990 for the Queen Mother's 90th birthday.

The opening section is marked *andante appassionato*. It contains two main ideas, the second more gentle and reflective. When I had brought this opening section to a natural close I was uncertain for some time what should come next. Then I read an essay by Bayan Northcott in which he points out how rare it is to find the 3/4 metre in contemporary music, whether serious or popular. He suggested that if composers want to do something fresh they should try reviving the waltz. I liked this idea and, as much of my opening section was already in triple time, it was easy to speed it up and for a waltz to emerge. This waltz forms a substantial middle section, after which the opening material returns, in a different form, before accelerating again to a distant reminiscence of the waltz (I imagined it played by a musical box). At the end, the waltz theme dissolves, leaving a final falling major second on the unaccompanied violin, the interval with which the piece begins.

David Matthews

Edward Elgar's Violin Sonata was actually his second. As a boy in Worcester, he held a violin before he could read, and throughout his youth he cherished aspirations as a performer, scraping together his savings (and surviving on "a bag of nuts" per day) to study with Adolphe Pollitzer in London. After that dream had faded, and with his ambitions as a composer repeatedly thwarted, violin teaching came to be his main source of income – and a ceaseless chore. He knew what he was doing when, in 1887, he composed his Opus 9 – a violin sonata – and (presumably) when he destroyed its manuscript shortly afterwards. By the time the world-famous Elgar poured a lifetime's frustrated yearning into his Violin Concerto in 1910, the violin had served him for five decades as the vehicle of his deepest disappointments and most passionate hopes.

So when, in the final months of the Great War, the 61-year old composer returned to the idea of a violin sonata, the music that emerged was intensely – even startlingly – personal. The Elgars had rented Brinkwells, a secluded woodland cottage in West Sussex, and Elgar had left behind the notebooks full of ideas and sketches (some decades old) that usually fuelled his creative process. In the secluded landscape of the Arun valley he drew instead on his inner resources. Alice Elgar noticed straight away that something special was happening, and noted in her diary that "E. is writing wonderful music, different from anything else of his. A. calls it wood magic. So elusive and delicate".

According to Elgar's diary, by mid-September 1918 the Violin Sonata was almost complete, and Elgar invited the violinist W H Reed to play the "Sonata and sketch Vtett [his Piano Quintet], also wooded in the wood". (The lore of the autumn woodlands around Brinkwells fascinated Elgar; Reed was pressed into chopping firewood). He wrote to an old friend and supporter Marie Joshua, offering her the dedication of the new work, adding "I fear it does not carry us any further but it is full of golden sounds and I like it". Days later, Marie died suddenly: Elgar dedicated the sonata, instead, to her memory ("M.J. - 1918") and as a gesture of remembrance, inserted a memory of the slow movement into the *finale*. The premiere was at his Hampstead home, Severn House, on 15th October; Reed was on violin Anthony Bernard on piano.

That slow movement is the heart of the Sonata; music, felt Reed, that was "utterly unlike anything I have ever heard...it is most fantastic, and full of touches of great beauty". Sombre opening yields to glimpse of a brief, skittering dance, and then a broad, questioning central melody (the one that Elgar inserted, at a faster tempo, in the *finale*). It sits between two big, sweeping movements, each agleam with Elgar's brilliant command of the violin. Yet these, too, have their mysteries - the quiet, shimmering writing in the first, as Elgar evokes the otherworldly chance-music of the Aeolian harp that he wedged in the window frame at Brinkwells, and the pools of limpid calm and sudden, jagged outbursts that break what Elgar half-seriously called the "broad and *soothing*" *finale*. And above all, the unpredictability and strange rawness of this music; the way that it never settles for long into any one mood; and that even the most lyrical moments are ruffled by uneasy quavers on the violin or sharp gusts from the piano. "If you cut that, it would bleed", Elgar used to say of passages in his music that particularly pleased him. That comment might apply to the whole of the Violin Sonata.

Richard Bratby

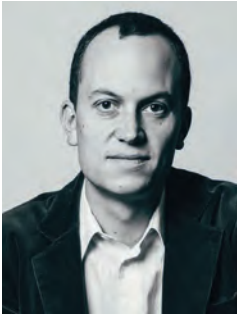


ZOË BEYERS

South-African born **Zoë Beyers** has established a reputation as one of the finest and most versatile violinists based in the UK, and performs worldwide as soloist, chamber musician, director and orchestral leader. 2018's BBC Proms saw Zoë lead the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic and perform Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*. Highlights of the 2018/2019 season are the Elgar and Britten concerti (Michael Seal / Corinthian Chamber Orchestra), and Korngold and Schumann (Kenneth Woods / ESO) in Boulder, Colorado and the U.K.

As a chamber musician Zoë appears with the Hebrides Ensemble, Nash Ensemble, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and the London Sinfonietta. Since 2017 Zoë has been the concertmaster of the English Symphony Orchestra. She frequently guest leads the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Hallé, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, Symphony and Scottish Symphony Orchestras, the Philharmonia, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Aurora Orchestra and the Orquesta Nacional de España at the invitation of maestro Juanjo Mena.

Zoë has a passionate interest in education, teaching at the Birmingham Conservatoire and coaching violinists and ensembles at the start of their careers. She is proud to be involved in ARCO, a distance learning collaboration between Birmingham Conservatoire and students in deprived areas of South Africa.



PHILIP MOORE

Philip Moore is originally from the Vale of Evesham. He studied at London's Royal Academy of Music with Hamish Milne, during which time he won many prizes. Upon leaving he was awarded the Meaker Fellowship, and was appointed an Associate of the RAM in 2003. In 2004 he became a Steinway Artist.

He has appeared as concerto soloist with the Hallé, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Philharmonia Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. He is the pianist of the Hebrides Ensemble, a member of the Colin Currie Group and has worked with many international artists, giving duo, chamber music and orchestral performances and broadcasts with the Nash Ensemble, LSO, LSO Percussion Ensemble, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, ECO Ensemble, Ensemble 360 and Conchord. He has recorded for Linn, Nonesuch, Naxos, LSO Live, Signum, Deux-Elles and Delphian Records.

Philip's piano duo with Simon Crawford-Phillips has won international prizes and awards, including a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship in 2004. They have given world premieres of Detlev Glanert's *Two Piano Concerto*; Anna Meredith's *Two Piano Concerto* (at the 2009 BBC Proms); and, more recently, Steve Reich's *Quartet* for two pianos and two vibraphones, with Colin Currie and Sam Walton, at the Royal Festival Hall, Carnegie Hall NY (listed as one of "The Ten Best Classical Performances of 2014" by *New York Magazine*), Kölner Philharmonie, Cité de la musique Paris, and other leading venues. In 2017 they gave the Japanese premiere at Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall.

In 2017 he joined the LSO under Sir Simon Rattle for performances of *Petrushka* in London and Paris. Earlier this year he toured Tokyo and Osaka with LSO Percussion Ensemble, giving the London and Japanese premieres of John Adams's *Roll Over Beethoven* for two pianos.

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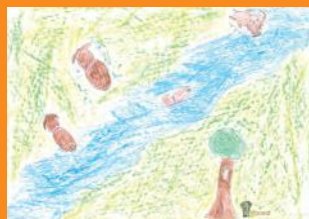
ESO YOUTH

The English Symphony Orchestra has been running children's orchestra courses, attracting students from all over the country, for almost as long as the orchestra itself has existed.

The core of our activities are the Beginners and Intermediate Orchestras, held every half term at the Downs Malvern Prep School, where we aim to complement the children's individual studies on their instruments and develop the skills of orchestral playing as well as general musicianship, confidence and sociability. We also run our flagship ESO Youth Orchestra during the summer holidays, which in 2019 will hold a residential course at Bromsgrove School, working on Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony under the baton of ESO Artistic Director Kenneth Woods. In recent years our activities have branched out into chamber music workshop days for intermediate and advanced level players, and in October we held a String Orchestra workshop looking at Vivaldi's Four Seasons with ESO leader Zoë Beyers. Our groups have appeared on stage in side-by-side projects with the "big" ESO on many occasions and have performed at venues including Worcester Cathedral, the Swan Theatre and Three Counties Showground, Malvern.

We continue to run a vibrant and diverse range of performance opportunities for children of all ages and abilities. To find out how you can get involved please visit eso.co.uk/eso-youth

Left: Elgar's Enigma Variations drawn by the children on the Children's Orchestra courses.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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